

The Silent Challenge

By Jim Grennan

Everyday living has many challenges. Some are constant challenges and others are but temporary. Some are of the moment, while others are forever. Some are mental, while others are physical. While many physical challenges are visible – the loss of an arm, a leg – others are silent. A silent challenge is a loss of hearing.

Most of us carry with us the silent challenge in some degree. The loss of hearing can arrive like a bolt of lightning or arrive like a gentle breeze on a spring day. However it arrives, it presents a constant challenge. "What did she say?" "What?" "Huh?" Because the challenge from loss of hearing cannot be seen, it is a silent challenge and one that tends to be hidden by those so challenged.

Hidden until it becomes so obvious that others realize you are not hearing what they have to say. Yet, when it becomes obvious that you are not hearing all that is said or when you

compensate for your hearing loss by acquiring hearing aids, your challenge is not as obvious from the hearing aids in your ear or behind your ear – or make that plural – as the other physical challenges of loss of an arm, leg or arms, or legs.



The silent challenge has been upon me now for nearly 30 years. I've heard from the bench, "Turn up your hearing aids." I've heard from the administrative judge, "Don't interrupt me with your statement that you can't hear what I just said, others hear me." Wow! This silent challenge can "send you packing" just as much as the loss of sight or loss of limbs. Some with physical challenges

retreat into a life of obscurity, while others continue to plow forward toward their goals.

Many of you face the silent challenge with your loss of hearing or face those so challenged such as the juror who cannot hear. I wonder how often a prospective juror is excused upon his advice that he cannot hear. Or, how many jurors that are hiding the loss known to them, are not fully hearing what is being said? How many lawyers have left the courtroom because they couldn't hear an argument at the bench?

Those of you with physical challenges need to join us on the committee of Lawyers with Physical Challenges. Can you get your wheel chair into the courthouse? Can you bring your assistive dog with you when you come to the courthouse? If your hearing loss is slight, or even profound to where you're in a silent world without your hearing aids, can you enter the courthouse and hear what is being said from

behind the rail or to the jury box? The committee of your bar association, Lawyers with Physical Challenges, is committed to let you answer those questions with a "Yes, I certainly can!!"

If you would like to get involved, please contact Robert T. Kincaid III at e-mail: RKincaid3@coxinet.net phone (405) 943-8300 or contact me, Jim Grennan, at jgrennan@swbell.net, phone (405) 789-1562.

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Article Submissions

Looking for articles that are humorous, transforming or intriguing. Law-related stories preferred but not required.

Length:

- two double-spaced pages or
- 1-1/4 single-spaced pages

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